Roberte the Deuyll.

Robert the Devil

BL

Here begynneth the lyfe of
Roberte the Deuyll.

Roberte the Deuyll.

A

METRICAL ROMANCE,

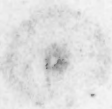
FROM AN

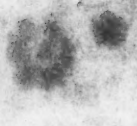
Ancient Illuminated Manuscript.

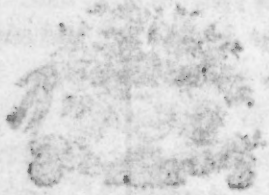
LONDON:

PRINTED FOR I. HERBERT.

1798.







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THIS MS. of ROBERT THE DEVIL appears to have been tranſcribed, word for word, from an edition in quarto printed either by *Wynken de Worde* or *Pynſon*, of which I have ſeen a fragment conſiſting of ſix leaves; theſe have been collated with the MS.

No mention is made of this edition in Mr. Herbet's Typographical Antiquities.* Nor have I ever ſeen a complete copy or heard of one: it it probable that the impreſſion was deſtroyed in the fire of London. There are no cuts in the fragment. The Drawings in the MS. ſeem to be of the time of Elizabeth or James I.

The MS. was formerly in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Radcilffe.

I. H.

* Though in p. 227 and 228 is given a tranſcript of the heads of the chapters, from an edition in the Public Library Cambridge, apparently in proſe, coinciding exactly in matter with this.

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THE LYFE OF Roberte the Deuyll.

LYSTEN lordinges that of marueyles lyke to heare
Of actes that were done sometyme in dede
By oure elders that before vs were
How some in myscheiffe their lyfe dyd leade
And in this boke may ye se yf that ye will rede
Of one Robert the deuyll, borne in Normandye
That was a terrible man as myght treade
On godden grounde for he delyted all in tyranye.

A Duke ſometyme in Normandye there was
Full uertuous and deuoute in all hys lyuynge
And in almoſe dedes, he yede in the waye of grace
Of knyghtlye maners, and manfull in iuſtynge
A Lordlye parſone, alſo courtes in euery thynge
Hys dwellynge was at Nauerne vpon ſayne
At Chryſtmas to honoure that holy tyme
Open houſholde he kepte, and to pleaſe God was
[fayne.

A feaſte he helde vpon a certayne daye
Lordes come thyther of greate renowne
And as they ſate at dyner a knyght gan ſaye
Vnto the Duke, and on hys knees kneled downe
My lorde he ſayd ye be owner of many a towne
Yet haue ye no lady, nor none heyre
After your dayes to reioyce youre grounde
Therfore gett youe a princes that ys yonge and fayre.

Wyueles longe ſaid the duke haue I taryed
And lyued ſole without any mate
I ſe well yt ys youre wyll that I ſhoulde be maryed
But yet woulde I haue one to myne eſtate
Accordynge, for and I ſhoulde take
A Lady of nobler bloude than I am
Or elſe of lower degre, ſoone ſhoulde I forſake
Myne owne worſhip, and lyue lyke no man.

Yf I ſhoulde nowe wedde, and after repent
And lyue in ſorowe and greate langoure
Than myght I ſaye that fortune had me ſent
A chaunce myſfortunate, diſtaynynge the floure
Of noble fame that ſhoulde encreaſe myne honoure
Wherfore lordes all, accordinge to prudence—
A foreſight ſayeth Salomon ys worthe treaſoure
Yet be ye ruled by fortune a Lady of excellence.

Than ſayde to the Duke a Baron right bolde
My lorde I beſeke youre grace of audyence
The Duke bade hym than ſaye what he woulde
In Burgonye ſayd the Baron ys a ladye of reuerence
Daughter to the Earle, yf yt pleaſe youre magnyfi-
Her for to take, there wyll no man ſaye naye [cence
Than to hys wordes the Duke gave credence
And ſayde I knowe well the Earles doughter that lady
[gaye

In proceſſe that lady to the Duke was maryed
A feaſte was made of greate ſolempnytye
And twelue yeares together they taryed
In wealth and greate proſperytye
Goddes lawe they kepte and lyued vertuouſlye
Yet chylde together had they none
They prayed to god with heart deuoutlye
Yf yt pleaſed hym for to ſende them one.

Euer they prayed, but yt woulde not be
In twelue yeare, chylde had they none
Good dedes they dyd, and gaue almoſe plentye
Alacke ſaid thys Ladye ſhall I lyue alone
Ofte ſhe ſyghed and made greate mone
That no chylde on her body woulde ſprynge
The good Duke alſo ever dyd grone
And ſayed good Jeſu yet heare my cryenge

Lorde ſende me a chylde the worlde to multyplye
The Duke ſayde, yf it be thy wyll
My wyfe ſorroweth in her partye
I feare that ſhe wyll her ſelfe ſpyll
Nothinge to the lorde that ys vnpoſſyble
Nowe heare my prayer for loue of thy mother
Sende me a chylde my petycion to fullfyll
For to be myrry I deſyre none other.

And on a tyme the Duke and Duches walked
In a garden by them ſelfe alone
Eche of them complayned and to other talked
Howe they could haue no chylde, and made much mone;
Full greate, and ſaide joy haue we none
I curſe them ſaide the Duke that made the maryage
For I had leuer to haue lyued ſtyll alone
Chylde haue I none, to reioyce myne herytage.

And

And ſaid yf I had be maryed to another ladye
I knowe that I ſhould have had chyldren ynowe
The Duches aunſwered as for her partye
Yf I had chaunged, verylye I trowe [youe
That chyldern I ſhoulde haue had, none haue I by
Let vs thanke god of that he doth vs ſende
For I beleue and do verelye trowe
That all oure ſorowe he may yt amende.

So on a morowe the Duke went on huntynge
Hys hearte was fullfylled all with thought
In hys mynde chydde, and agayne god grudgynge
He ſighed ſore inwardlye and ofte
If he myght haue dyed, nothynge he rought
And ſayde god loueth not me, all in dyſpayre
Many women haue chyldren: but myne nought
Alas I trowe I ſhall have none to be myne heyre

The fende tempted ſoore the Duke tho
That he wyſt not what to do nor ſaye
He left huntynge and homewarde he dyd go
And in to hys chaumber he toke the waye
So there the Duches at the ſame tyme laye
In as greate trouble as her huſbande was
And to her lorde ſaide no chylde I beare maye
I am vnhappye, and therewith ſayde alas.

He

He toke her in hys armes and her kyſte
And of that Lady he had all his pleaſure
And ſo begate a chyld; and yt not wyſte
The Duke to oure Lorde made hys prayer
For to ſende hym a chylde for to gladde hys chere
The ladye ſaide the Deuyll now ſende vs one
For god wyll not oure petycion heare
Therefore I trowe power hath he none

She ſayde yf I be conceyued this houre nowe
I geve yt to the deuyll both ſoule and bodye
Lo thys lady was nere folyſhe I trowe
And fullfylled with great obſtynacye
Her owne ſoule there ſhe dyd put in ieopardye
For that houre ſhe dyd conceyve with a man chylde
That whan he was borne lyued myſcheuouſlye
In thefte and murder lyke a tyraunte wylde

The tyme drewe ſo that nyne monethes was paſt
Than her tyme drewe on veryo nye
At the houre of byrth ſhe laboured faſt
More than a moneth the boke doth ſpecyfye
She had many throwes, with many a pytteous crye
Ladyes prayed for her, and gaue almeſe dede
They trowed verelye that ſhe ſhoulde dye
With that our ladye wolde her helpe and ſpede.

And

And aſsone as Robert the deuyll was borne
The ſkyes waxed blacke that it was wonder
And ſodenlye there began a full greate ſtorme
Rayne lyghtenynge with horrible thonder
They feared that the houſe would ryue a ſonder
Then blewe the wynde with greate power
That they wende the dome had he comen there
For downe wente wyndowes and euery doore.

Halfe the houſe the deuyll pulled downe
Yet at the last the wether waxed cleare
So for dreade thys lady laye in a ſowne
That greate wetherynge ſhe dyd ſore feare;
Her gentlewomen bade her be of good chere
They told her that the wather was gone and paſt
Then to the churche the chylde they dyd beare
And chryſtened yt Robert at the laſt.

He was as bygge the ſame daye
As ſome chylde of twelue monethes olde
When they came from Churche he cryed all the waye
That yt made many hym to beholde
Men ſade the chylde loked very bolde
Hys teeth grewe faſt when that he ſhoulde ſoucke
The noryſhe nypples ſo harde byte he woulde
That yt went then to her verye hearte roote.

There

There durſt no woman geue hym ſuck in faye
For hys teeth grewe ſo perylouſlye
That the noryſshe nypples be bote a waye
But than they woulde no more byde the iopardye
So with an horne he was fedde trewlye
At the years ende he could bothe go and ſpeake
The elder he waxed, the more vnhappye
Shrewdnes he woulde do bothe in houſe and ſtreate

Hurte would he do to woman and man
Vngracious was he daye and nyght
Yf he amonge any chyldren came
He woulde them hurte both ſcratche and byte
Caſte ſtones at theyr heades and fyght
Breake their ſhynnes and put ſome eyes oute
Lordes and ladyes of hym had greate delyght
And wende yt had ben but wantonnes withoute [doute.

Mennes chyldren there he dyd muche harme
Of them he hurte ſhrewdelye many a one
Breake bothe legge headde and arme
Therefore he was beloued of none
Hys companye chyldren forſoke everychone
They dyd flee fro him as the deuyll fro holy water
We wyll not haue hym amonge vs to come
They ſayd and he never do; we be gladder.

For

For and the chyldern had ſeen hym come
In to the ſtreate there for to playe
They woulde take theyr legges, and away runne
To theyr fathers as faſte as they maye
Roberte the Deuyll dothe come they would ſaye
For yonge chyldren gave him that name
The chyldren hydde them in corners euery daye
And to runne from hym they woulde leaue theyr game.

And whan that he was aboute ſeuen yeare of aege
Hys father ſette hym to ſcole in dede
With a dyſcrete man and a ſage
And prayed hys ſonne that he would ſpede
For to learne both to wryte and reade
And to Roberte the deuyll hys father ſayde
Sonne, yf thy lyfe in vertue thoue leade
Than wyll I with the be right well a payed.

Robert the Deuyll wente to ſcole a lytell ſpace
And euer he thought yt to longe ywys
He learned ſo that he was paſt all grace
Yt happened at the laſt he dyd amyſſe
Hys maſter ſayde Syr youe muſte amende thys
Or elles forſothe ye ſhalbe beate
He ſayde yf thou ſmyte me I wyll make the wyſhe
That thou thyne owne fleſhe rather had eate.

Naye ſayde hys maſter ye be to bolde
And toke a rodde for to chaſte hym ſoone,
So to beate hym he ſayde that he woulde
Roberte ſawe what he purpoſed to done
And ſayde ye were better lette me a lone
For with a dagger he thruſt hym in to the bellye
That the bloude ran downe in to hys ſhone
So ſlewe hys maſter, and let hym deade lye.

Whan Robert the Deuyll ſawe hys maſter fall
He ſayde he woulde go to ſcole no more
Hys boke he threwe agaynſt the wall
The deuyll have the whyt that he was ſorye therfore
Alacke he made hys fathers hearte ſoore
When that hys maſter had ſlayne
The Duches curſed the houre that he was bore
She ſayde of hys companye no man ys fayne.

After that there woulde no pryſt hym teache
He folowed uice, he woulo be ruled by none
And mocke pryſtes whan they ſhoulde preache
For and he into the church had gone
He woulde ſkorne the clearkes euerychone
And when they ſonge, come them behynde
So threwe duſt in theyr mowthes by one and one
And ſome in theyr eyes to make them blynde.

Yf he ſawe any men or women deuoutlye knele
For to ſerue God with theyr prayer, or ſtande
Pryuelye behynde them woulde he ſteale
And geue them a ſowce with hys hande
To cauſe ſome to yell out theyr tongues longe
Or els he woulde make theyr heades go to grounde
Theyr neckes he hurte ſore he was ſo ſtronge
And many olde folkes he cauſed to ſounde.

Yt was vnpoſſible for a clarke to write
The dedes he dyd that weare full vengeable
Then gentlemen that weare ſadde and dyſcrete
Complayned to hys father withoute fable
The Duke ſayde, to chaſte hym I am not able
Than Robert was brought before hym
He ſayde: Sonne, thy dedes ben reproueable
Thou ſhameſt me and all thy hole kynne.

Thow doeſt all thynge that dyſpleaſeth god
Thy ſcolemaſter thou ſleweſt with a knyfe
Becauſe that he woulde haue beate the with a rodde
To the pryſtes in churche thou doeſt muche greyſe
Full ofte I wyſhe me oute of my lyfe
For thou of thy dedes arte ſo houge and peryllouſe
That chyldren younge bothe mayde and wyfe
Whyche dothe the knowe geueth the theyr curſe

All one with hym, in at the one eare and out at [the other
He was neuer the better daye nor nyght
Hys olde laye kept, he woulde do none other
He was neuer glad but when he dyd fyght
To ſwere and lye, theryn he had great delyght
At laſt hys mother to her lorde ſpake
And ſayd yt were beſt to make hym a knyght
Thys noble ordre let Robert the deuyll take.

For I truſt then he wyll amende
Whan he that greate othe doth heare
Yt wyll make hym ſorye for that he dyd offende
And the workes of god hereafter for to leare
The Duke conſented euen right there
And aſked Robert yf he would lyue vnder awe
Of god, and the order of knight-hode beare
He aunſwered I ſett not thereby a ſtrawe.

At the laſt Robert was made a knyght
Hys father bade him take hede of hys othe
To deſtroye wronge and to maynteyne right
And do trewe juſtyce for leefe or for lothe
For a knyght that in cheualrye goethe
Euer agaynſt vice he muſt fyght
And ſupporte trewe maydens, and he ſo dothe
He ys an inherytoure of heaven, goddes own knyght.

Robert

Robert aunſwered, father at youre commandement
I wyll thys greate order vpon me take
But for to chaunge all myne entent
As for my manners I wyll not forſake
All men ſhall not ones me make
For to leaue my cuſtomes olde
I will contynewe and neuer wyll ſlake
Thoughe I therfore my lyfe loſe ſhoulde.

The Duke cauſed a greate iuſtynge to be
Lordes came fro many a farre lande
And Ladyes alſo that runnynge to ſee
He that ſhoulde be moſte doughtye of hande
There was many a knight full ſtronge
That thought theyr clothes of full greate pryce
Yet a gayne Roberte there myght none ſtande
As for worſhip by hym woulde none ryſe.

A fyelde was ordeyned bothe brode and wyde
With lyſtes fayre where they ſhould runne
Tentes were pyght on euery ſyde
Greate was the people that thether come
The daye was fayre, hote ſhone the ſonne [crye
Greate trumpets blewe, the herauldes made theyr
That euery knyght hys deuoure ſhoulde done
For to proue who was moſte myghtye.

Knightes

Knyghtes then dreſſed them to the fyelde
In ſyluer armoure fayre and bright
Barons doughtye with ſpeare and ſhylde [lyght
With helmes and haubreks that all the ſyelde dyd
Steedes in trappoure the was a goodlye ſyght
Speare heades that a ſtrong cote woulde ſaylle
Clothe of golde in harnes curyonſlye pyght
Worne of haburgin many a ſtronge mayle.

Roberte the deuyll came in as meke as a Lyon
In his fyſte he had a greate ſpeare
Of ſure wodde both toughe and longe
Hys loke ſo grymme many men dyd feare
Alſo that houghe ſtaffe that he dyd beare
Was almoſt as bygge as ſome twayne.
Vnoccupyed ſaide Robert why ſtand we here
For to leaue all worke he woulde full fayne.

The Duke bade them all to begynne
A fayre knyght then feutred hys ſpeare
In fayth ſayde Robert I wyll run to hym
And lyghtly turned hys greate ſtede theare
Eche agayne other ſpeares did beare
Thoſe courſers dyd runne, they ſmote in the fyelde
Hartye were bothe, nought did they feare
That knyght ſmote Robert ſore in the ſhyelde.

That

That the ſtroke made Robert right wrothe
To him he thought to ryde agayne
He feutred hys ſpeare, and forthe he gothe
With hys ſhyelde Robert mette playne
And ſtroke ſo ſoore that he ſmote it euen in twayne
And throughe the knightes ſhulder the ſpeare dyd runne
I trowe therof Robert was fayne
And aſked yf any more woulde come.

Another knyght thought Robert to aſſaylle
So yode they together with greate raundone
Loth were they bothe for to fayle
And haſtelye theyr ſtedes ſtrongelye dyd runne
So ſwyfte with ſtrenght Robert dyd come
That hys ſpeare ran thorowe the knyghtes bodye
And to the earthe dead fell he downe
All men wondred of Robert trewlye.

The thyrde knyght to the grounde he ſmote
And brake hys horſe backe a ſonder
There was none that myght ſtande a ſtroke
Of hym that daye, nowe the people dyd wonder
To ſe that all knyghtes to hym were vnder
For ſo ſoore Robert dyd them aſſayle (thonder
A man had ben as good to haue be ſmytten with
As to haue a ſtroke of hys hand without faylle.

Thre

Thre noble Barons he ſlewe there that daye
He fared as he had ben a fyende of hell
As was in earneſte, and not in playe
Fro theyr horſes many knyghtes he fell
And breke theyr armes as the bokes do tell
For he trewe ſo greſelye and foore
That they knewe nother wo nor well
On ſtedes myght they ryde never more.

All that he mette, he them down threwe
Yonge nor olde he ſpared none
For pittye had he no more than a Jue
That daye he hurte there many a one
And lyke a boore at the mouth he dyd fome
He fought and ſtroke all while that he was able
In peace he woulde not haue them to ſtande alone
He loued murderers that were euer vengeable.

To kyll and ſlea was all hys delyght
Tenne noble ſtedes backes he dyd bruſt
When that he at theyr maſters dyd ſmyte
Or with hys ſpeare at them dyd thruſt
To fight euer more and more he had luſt
For all hys pleaſure was in deathe ſett
And euer he cryed who wyll more iuſte
The deuyll was in hym no man myght hym lette.

And

And whan hys father ſawe howe in vengeaunce
He was ſett, and woulde no ſad wayes take
In hys thought he toke greate greuance
And bade that all the knyghtes ſhoulde departe
Eche theyr waye, and no more juſtes to make
Than Robert woulde not obey the commaundement
Of hys father, but ſayd ſorowe ſhoulde awake
For then in myſcheif he ſett all hys ententte.

He woulde not go fro the battaylle
But hue and ſlewe on euery ſyde
The ſtronge knightes there he dyd aſſaylle
All the people fledde, they durſt not abyde
The knyghtes all awaye dyde tyde
With lordes and Ladyes euerychone
Robert lought whan he that ſpyed
Than thought he I will no more go home.

Than Robert rode into the countrey
And robbed and kylled many a one
Maydens and wyues he rauyſhed pytteouſlye
He pulled downe abbeys and houſes of ſtone
For all the Churches that he dyd by come
Thorowe that countrey of Normandye
By hys wyll there ſhoulde ſtande none
For all hys pleaſure was in murder and robberye.

He brente houſes and ſlewe yonge chyldren
Death vpon death was all hys lyfe
The countrey complayned to hys father
Howe theyr ſeruantes were ſlayne with Robertes
Some ſayde he hathe rauyſhed my wyfe [knyfe
And by oure doughters he hathe layne
They prayed the Duke to ſtynte that ſtryfe
Or to flee that lande they would full fayne.

The Duke wepte and ſayde alas
That euer I hym begate on woman
My prayer vnto Jeſu euer was
For to ſende me a chylde for I had none
And nowe gode hath ſente me one
That maketh me full heauy and ſad
The Duches wayled and made great mone
That from her mynde ſhe was nye madde.

The Duke made hys ſeruantes to ryde
To ſeke Robert in Cyttie and in towne
Good watche was layde on euery ſyde
On holte and heath in fyelde and towne
And in euery place that they dyd come
The countrey Robert dyd curſe and blame
And prayed that he myght haue an yll death ſoone
For he the ordre of knyghthode dothe ſhame.

With

With Robert at the laſt theſe men mette
They ſayde that he ſhoulde with them them goo
All aboute Robert ſhortlye they ſette
One aſked hym what he woulde doo
Wylt thou go with vs, he ſayde noo
And drewe hys ſworde and with them dyd fyght
Full greate woundes he gaue one or twoo
And all the reſydue he put to flyght.

And all that he toke he put theyr eyes oute
So bade them go ſeeke theyr way home
And ſerued them all ſo withoute doute
Theſe poore men they made greate mone
So Robert departed and lefte them alone
And ſayde tell my father that yt ys for hys ſake
Then theſe men in tyme to the courte came home
And ſhewed what maſtryes Robert dyd make.

Thys good Duke in hearte was right wo
When he ſawe hys mennes eyes oute
Fore angre he wyſt not what to do
But commaunded all the courte aboute
Counſtables and bayllifes with all theyr route
All men to take hym who ſo maye
And in pryſon to put hym without doute
He charged all men good watche to laye.

So when Robert knewe of thys warke
He gathered a great companye theues yll
He gate hym into a forreſt full darke
Where yt was farre from boroughe or hyll
There he lyued and all dyd he kyll
That he myght ſe in the heath ſo playne
Corne and fruites all dyd he ſpyll
In doynge myſcheif allwaye was he fayne.

Yt was hys pleaſure to eate fleſhe on the frydaye
A dogge dyd faſte as well as he
Poore pylgrymes he kylled goynge by the waye
And holy hermytes that lyued deuoutlye
So on a daye he roſe vppe earlye
And in the forreſt ſeuen hermytes he founde
Before a croſſe knelynge on theyr knee
Of theyr prayers to heauen wente the ſownde.

What holy whoreſones he ſayde be youe
That gapeth vpwardes after the moone
If ye be a thruſt ye ſhall drynke nowe
And oute he drewe hys ſwearde full ſoone
The hermytes wyſt no what to done
But ſuffered death for Jeſus ſake [runne
So throughe one of theyr bodyes hys ſworde dyd
For feare all the other dyd tremble and quake.

Than.

Than he ſtrake of theyr heades all
And reioyſed at that perylouſe dede
In ſcorne he ſayde, ſyrs do youe fall
Patter and praye ye in youre crede
Full faſte theſe holy men dyd blede
That Robertes clothes were readde as vermulon
With hys ſworde he thought further to ſpede
In vengeaunce he rought not where he become.

Lo thys caytiffe was blynde and myght not ſee
The cloudes had in clypped the Sunne of grace
Lyke to an apple that the core doſt putryfie
The darke myſtes of uice ſmote hym in the face
He was none of the ſhepe of Iſrael but the kyd of
He exyled pittye as dyd cruel Kynge Pharao [golyas
Heaped full of ſynne, as euer he was
That ſlewe hys own mother, men called hym Nero.

Then he lefte theſe ſeuen hermytes deadde
And rode oute of the wodde lyke a wylde dragon
So lyke a bore he threwe vp hys headde
The bloude of the hermytes couered all hys gowne
A ſhepherde he ſawe and rode to hym ſoone
But whan the herdes man dyd hym eſpye
Yt was no hede to bydde hym begone
He ranne hys waye then for feare dyd he crye.

At

At the laſte he the ſhepherde ouertoke in faye
And aſked what tydynges that he woulde tell
The ſhepherd agayne to hym dyd ſaye [hell
I was of youe afrayde I wende ye had come oute of
And as for tydynges, here ys darkenes caſtell
There lyeth the Duches of Normandye
With many a lorde of her counſell
Of all thys greate lande the royalltye.

So Robert came to the towne there the caſtell
The people ſawe one ryde as he had ben madde [ſtode
With a ſworde in hande, and all arayed in bloude
To runne in to houſe euery man was gladde
At the laſt Robert began to waxe ſadde
And ſayde alas that euer he was borne
In murder and myſchief my lyfe haue I ladde
Hys heere of hys heade he thought to haue torne.

Than he was a baſhed ſoore in hys mode
Whan that the people woulde hym not abyde
What yt mente than he vnderſtode
Euery body them ſelfe from hym dyd hyde
Than to the Caſtle gate Robert dyd ryde
Ayd fayne with ſome body he woulde ſpeake
But whan any man hym eſpyede
They ranne awaye as they dyd in the ſtreate.

Than

Than with a heauy hearte downe dyd he lyght
And went ſtreyght into the Caſtell hall
But when the people of hym had a ſight
None durſt hym byde there at all
Many for helpe dyd crye and calle
Hys mother ſawe hym as ſhe ſate at meate
For feare ſhe beganne to fall
And haſted her awaye for to gette.

And when he ſawe hys mother goynge
He ſayde alas Lady mother ſpeake with me
Hys hearte for ſorowe braſt in weepynge
Whan he ſawe her from hym ſo flee
And ſayde to hys mother full pitteouſlye
Lady tell me howe that I was borne
That I haue ledde my lyfe ſo miſcheuouſlye
In the tempeſte of vice with many a greate ſtorme.

Hys mother all unto hym tolde
Howe ſhe gaue hym to the fende both ſoule and bodye
And he aſked her howe ſhe durſte be ſo bolde
To gyue hym from god allmightye
I knowe he ſayd that I haue lyued ſynfullye
As euer dyd the emperoure greate Nero
Amende I wyll and for mercye crye
My dedes will I bewaylle wherſoeuer I go.

Hys

Hys mother prayed hym to ſmyte of her headde
For the treſpace ſhe ſayde, that I dyd to thee
I am worthye therefore for to be deadde
To god I offended alſo in obſtynacye
Slea me ſhe ſayde, and I forgiue yt thee,
He ſayde, Mother I wyll not do ſo
I had leuer be beaten full bytterlye
And on my feate to the worldes ende to go.

Than for woo Robert fell to the grounde
And a greate whyle there he ſo laye
There ſodenlye he roſe in that ſtounde
And ſaide Mother nowe I go my waye
To Rome wyll I hye as faſt as I maye
And prayed her to commende hym to hys father dere
So he deſyred them all for hym to praye
And went forth with a full pytteous chere.

So ſhortly Robert toke hys horſe and rode
Streyght vnto the forreſt to hys companye
Than the Duches that in the Caſtle abode
Shryked full ſore with a full pytteous crye
And ſaide alas lorde to ſynfull am I
All women beware, curſe neuer your chylde
And yf that ye do, then be yeue in jeopardye
Alſo in myſcheyff they ſhalbe defyelde.

Wyth

Wyth that the Duke came into the chaumber
And aſked her why ſhe dyd wepe and wayle
She ſayde Robert youre ſonne hath ben here [fayle
And ſhewed how that he wolde to Rome without
Ah, ſayde the Duke, I feare yt wyll lyttell auayle
He is not able to make reſtytucyon
Alacke ſayd the Duke yet am I gladde fauns fayle
That he ys wyllynge to make hys confeſſion.

Nowe ys Robert come to the forreſt agayne
And founde hys men all at dyner ſyttynge
To conuerte them to goodnes he would full fayne
And ſayde my felowes, with pyttoous lamentynge
Let vs remember oure ſynfull lyuynge
And aſke god mercy with greate repentaunce
Yf we leade thys lyfe ſtyll, yt will vs brynge
To hell withoute ende, with horrible vengeaunce.

Let vs remember he ſaide our ſynfull lyfe
We haue murdered people full cruellye
Rauyſhed maydens and many a wyfe
Slayne pryeſtes and hermytes full pytteouſlye
And abbeys haue ben dyſtroyed through our robbery
With Nunnes, Ankers, take yt in remembraunce
Howe we put them in ieopardie
Wherfore I dreade hell, with horrible vengeaunce.

Houſes we haue brentte many a one
And ſpylte of chyldren much precyous bloude
Compaſſion there, nor pyttye had we none
In myſcheyff we delyted, and neuer in good
And nowe let vs remember hym that dyed on the rode
That from vs yet hath kept hys ſworde by ſufferaunce
For and we nowe in deathes daunce ſtode
To hell ſhoulde we go, with horrible vengeaunce.

One ſayde Robert, what be youe there
And ſtode up and began hym to ſkorne
Will youe ſee fellowes: the fox wylbe an anker
What maſter, ye be as wyſe as a ſhepe newe ſhorne
I trowe youre buttocke be prycked with a thorne
For your wytt ys oute of temperaunce
I woulde not haue thys tearme aboute borne
That we ſhoulde to hell go with horrible venge-
[aunce.

Another theſe ſaide maſter Roberte, harke
To preache to vs yt ys all in vayne
And what I ſaye, I praye you yt marke
Thys lyfe wyll we leade in wordes playne
Euer yet in theſe workes we haue be fayne
For our ſynne we entende not to do pennaunce
We wyll not forſake thoughe ye ſtryue vs agayne
To hell woulde we rather go with horrible vengeaunce.

Than

Than Roberte ſawe that they woulde not amende
But in myſcheyf there to lyue ſtyll
And to the poore men they wyll ofte offende
Thus then he conſpyred in hys wyll
One after another for to kyll
To make ſhort he kylled them euerychone
He ſayde ye haue be readye euer to do euyll
Therfore alyue wyll I not leaue one.

He tolde them a good ſeruaunte muſt haue good
Nowe do I paye youe after your deſeruynge [wages
There dead in the floore all theyr bodyes ſprayles
Robert ſhutt the doore and they laye within
And ſayde of myſcheyf this ys the endynge
So he thought to ſett the houſe on fyre
But he dyd not, he yode a waye ſighynge
And ſayd alas I haue payde my men theyr hyre.

Than Robert toke hys horſe and bleſſed hym
So throughe the forreſt he toke the waye
Ouer hylles and downes faſt rydynge
Thus rode he ſtyll all a longe daye
And ofte for ſynne he cryed well awaye
Than of an abbaye he had a ſight
Whiche ofte he had robbed in good faye
Alas ſaide Robert there will I lodge to nyght.

For faulte of meate then he hongred sore.
And sayde to eate sayne I wolde haue some.
Alacke nowe that euer I was bore
And when the monkes dyd se hym come
Eche man hys waye fast dyd ronne
And saide here cometh the furyous serpent
Roberte, which ye I trowe a deuylls sonne
That in murmer and myscheif hath a greate talent.

Than forthe he rode to the churche dore.
And dyscended from his horse right there
So he kneled downe in the floore
And to oure lorde god he made hys prayer.
Sayinge, swete Jesu that bought me dere
Haue mercy on me for that pretyous bloude.
That ran from your heaste with longis speare
Which stonge youe in the side hangynge on the roode.

Then vp he rose and went to the Abbot.
And sayde to hym with pitteouse lamentynge
I haue bene so symple father, that ye well wot
That nowe I feare the swerde that ys lyghtly comynge
Of our lordes vengeaunce for my false lyuynge.
And of all that I haue offended vnto youe
Forgeue me for hys loue that was hangynge [bowe.
Seuen houres on the crosse and there hys head dyd

And

And when they hearde hym pitteouſlye complayne
And in hys harde hearte toke repentaunce
The monckes all thereof were fayne
So there he tolde them all in ſubſtaunce
Howe he was in wyllynge to ſuffer pennaunce
And to Rome to take hys Journeye
So there he called to hys remembraunce
Of hys lodge and therof toke the abbot the keye.

Thys keye to the Abbot there he toke
And tolde hym that he ſhoulde haue all the treaſure
In the theues lodge yf that he woulde loke
That he had robbed ſynce the fyrſt houre
And ſaide my meynye lyen dead in the floore
The Abbot he prayed to geue hys father the keye
For I wyll not ſlepe one night where I do another
Tyll I in Rome with the pope ſpeke maye.

And praye my father to make reſtytucyon
For me to all them that I dyd offende
I crye hym mercy alſo I am hys ſonne
Hym for to myſcheif alſo I dyd entende
But what thoughe, nowe I truſt to amende
There Robert toke hys leaue of all the hole couent
Hys horſe and hys ſworde he to hys father ſende
And ſo departed and on hys feete forthe wentte.

Than

Than rode the Abbot to the Duke of Normandye
And ſhewed of Robert all that was befall
There he delyuered vp the keye
And of hys entente he ſheowid the Duke all
Then he hys men before hym dyd call
And ſayde I wyll ryde and reſtore the goodes agayne
And euery man hys owne haue ſhall
Then were the Dukes ſeruauntes all fayne.

Nowe Robert walked ouer dale and hyll
By holte and heath, many a wery waye
He laboured night and daye euer ſtyll
At the laſt he came to Rome on Sherethurſdaye
All nyght poorely in the ſtreate he laye
And on the good frydaye to churche he went tywis
Towardes the quyere and nothynge dyd ſaye
For that daye the Pope ſayed all the ſeruyce.

The Popes ſeruauntes bade hym go backe
They ſmote Robert and thruſt hym aſyde
Tho to hym ſelf he ſayde, oute alacke
Yet he thought boldlyer for to abyde
Where people were thynneſt there he eſpyed
So preſt amonge them tyll he came to the pope
And fell downe to hys fete and loude there he cryed
As rayne the teares fell fro hys eyes god wotte.

The

The popes ſeruauntes would haue pulled hym aſyde
Oure holy father, yet aunſwered naye
Medle not with hym, lett hym abdyde
That I maye here what he dothe ſaye;
Robert aunſwered I am here thys daye
The ſynfulleſt lyuer that euer was founde
Synce Adam was made in Canaan of clâye
I am the greateſt ſynner that lyued on grounde.

The pope ſayde what art thou good frende
And whye makeſt thoue thys lamentacon
Oh good father ſaide Robert to god I haue offended
I deſyre youe to heare my confeſſion
Of my greate ſynnes the abhominacon
On them to muſe yt ys vnnumerable
Vice and I reſted all waye in one habytacion
With murder and euery vnthryftye culpable.

Art thou Robert the deuyll ſayde the pope than
That ys the worſt creature of all the worlde yll
Yee yee ſyr ſayde Robert I am the ſame man
Greate myſcheyf haue I do, and muche yll
As to robbe and ſlea, both burne and kyll
The pope ſayd, here in goddes name I thee warne
By uertue of hys paſſion ſtande here ſtyll
Do to me nor my men no maner of harme.

Naye

Naye naye ſayde Robert, neuer chryſten man
Wyll I hurte by night nor daye
The pope toke hym by the hande than
And bade hym hys confeſſion to hym ſaye
Thereto Robert woulde not ſaye naye
But all hys ſynnes confeſſed and tolde
The pope whan he hym hearde dyd quake for fraye
For to heare hys ſynnes hys hearte waxed nye colde.

And tolde howe hys mother gaue hym to the feende
In the houre of hys fyrſt contemplacyon [of hell
The pope ſayd Robert I thee tell
Thou muſt go to an hermyte three miles withoute the
Robert ſayde with good will thys ſhalbe done [towne
Then wente he to the popes goſtlye father
The pope commaunded hym ſo to done
That the hermyte might hys confeſſion heare.

In the mornynge Robert walked ouer hyll and dale
He was full werye of his labourynge
At the laſte he came in to a greate vale
And founde ſame hermyte ſtandinge
He ſpake with the hermyte, and ſhewed of hys lyuynge
And tolde that he was ſente ſo the pope of Rome
But when that holy man hearde hys confeſſion
He ſayed brother ye be right welcome.

And

And for youre fynnes euer youe muſte be ſorye
For as yet I will not abſoylle youe
In a lyttell chappell all nyght ſhall youe lye
Do ye as I do youe counceil nowe
Aſke god mercye, and let youre hearte bowe
For all thys nyght I wyll wake and praye
Vnto oure lorde, that I maye knowe
Yf in ſaluacion ye do ſtande in the waye.

So they departed, the hermyte fell on ſlepe
An aungell ſodenlye to hym dyd appeare
And ſaide to Goddes commaundement take good kepe
And of Robertes pennaunce thou ſhalt heare,
He muſte counterfeyt a fole in all manere
The meate that he ſhall eate, he muſte pull yt from
And neuer to ſpeake, but as he dombe weare [a dogge
Thys pennaunce done, he ſhalbe forgeuen of god.

The hermyte with that ſhortlye dyd awake
And called Robert, and ſpeake to hym [take
And ſaide heare nowe the pennaunce that ye ſhall
God commaundeth the to counterfet a foole in all thinge
Meate none to eate, withoute a dogge do yt bringe
To the in hys mouth, then muſte thou yt eate
No worde to ſpeake, but as dombe eues beynge
With dogges euery nyght alſo thou muſt ſleepe.

The hermyte ſaid, tyll thy ſynnes be forgyue
Thou muſt do as I haue here ſayde
With thys ſharpe pennaunce thou muſt lyue
Tyll god of hys debtes hy the be payde
Forget not thys, in thy hearte let it be layde
At the laſt god wyll ſende the worde agayne
Robert wepte as thoughe he ſhoulde haue dyed
And ſayde thys pennaunce will I do full fayne.

The hermyte bade hym remember althyngs
And whan thy ſynnes be clene forgyuen the
By an Aungell god wyll ſende the warnyngs
Nowe maye thou no longer byde with me
Robert bleſſed the hermyte then mewlye
So eche toke theyr leaue of other
Newe god for euer be wyth the
He ſayd to Robert, adewe farewell brother.

Thus poore Robert departed fro the hermyte
And bleſſed hym and agayne went to Rome
For to do hys pennaunce in the ſtrete
And whan that he thether was come
Lyke as he had ben a foole he dyd rome
And lepte and daunced from one ſyde to another
Many folke laughed at hym ſoone
And wende he had ben a foole, they knew none other.

Boyes

Boyes followed hym throughe the ſtrete
Caſtynge ſtyckes and ſtones at hym
And ſome with roddes hys bodye dyd beate
The chyldren made greate ſhoutes and cryenge
Burges of the cyttie at Robett hys laughynge
Oute of theyr wyndowes to ſe hym playe
The boyes threwe dyrte and myre at hym
Thus contynewed Robert manye a dayes.

Thus he playes the foole on a ſeaſon
He came on a tyme to the Emperours Courte
And ſawe that the gate ſtode all open
Robert ranne into the hall and beganne to worke
So daunced and lept and abouts ſo ſtarte
At the laſte the Emperoure had pytie on hym
Howe he tare hys clothes and gnaw hys ſkyrte
And bade a ſeruaunte meete hym for to bringe:

Thys ſeruaunte brought Robert plentye of meate
So proferde hyt hym and ſaide go dyne
Robert ſate ſtyll he wouldo not eate
Yet god wote hys belly greate pyne
At laſt the emperoure ſayde yonder ys a hounde of myne.
And bade hys ſeruaunte throwe hym a bone
So he dyd, and whan Robert yt had ſpyne
Alack thought Robert, he ſhall not eate yt alone.

He lept from the table and with the dogge faught
And all for to haue the bone awaye
The hounde at the laſt by the fyngers hym caught
So ſtyll in hys mowthe he kepte hys praye,
Whan Robert ſawe that, downe he laye
The dogge gnewe the one ende and Robert the other
The Emperoure laughed whan he that ſawe
And ſayde the dogge and he fought harde together.

The Emperoure ſawe that he was hongrye
And bade to throwe the dogge a bole loffe
Whan Robert ſawe that he was glad greatelye
For to loſe hys parte he was right lothe,
And agayne to the dogge he goeth
So brake the loffe a ſonder and to the hounde
He gaue the one halfe to ſaye the ſothe
And eate the other as the dogge dyd on the grounde.

The Emperoure ſaide, ſyth that I was borne
Sawe I neuer a more foole naturall
Nor ſuche an ydeot ſawe I neuer beforne
That had leuer eate that that to the dogge dyd fall
Rather then that that was proffered hym in the hall
Than Robert toke hys ſtaffe and ſmote at forme and ſtile
What ſorowe was in hys hearte they knewe not all
There men were gladde to ſee hym playe the foole.

At

At the laſt Robert went into a garden
And there he founde a fayre fountayne
He was a thurſt and whan he had dronken
He wente in to hys dogge agayne
To folowe hym euer he was fayne
Thus vnder a ſtayre at nyght laye the hounde
And euer hys pennaunce Robert dyd not dyſdayne
Allwaye hys bed was with the dogge on the grounde.

Whan the Emperoure eſpyed hym lye there
Fett hym a bed to a man dyd he faye
And lett yt be layed for hym under the ſtayre
So they dyd and Robert poynted as naye
And woulde have them to beare the bed awaye
Then they fett hym an arme full of ſtrawe
And therupon by hys dogge he laye
All men marueyled that yt ſawe.

Muche myrth and ſporte he made euer amonge
And as the Emperoure was at dyner on a daye
A Jue ſate at the borde, that greate rowme longe
In that houſe beare, and was receyued all waye
Than Roberte hys dogge toke in hys armes in faye
And touched the Jue and he ouer hys ſholder loked backe
Robert ſet the dogges ars to hys mowth without naye.
Full ſoore the Emperoure loughe whan he ſawe that.

Robert.

Robert ſawe a bryde that ſhoulde be maryed
And ſoone he toke her by the hande
So into a foule dongye myxen he her caryed
And in the myre he let her ſtande
The Emperoure ſtode and beholde hym longe
At the laſt Robert tokea quycke Catte
And renne into the kechyn amonge the thronge
And threwe her quycke into the beeſe potte.

Lordes and barons loughe that they couldenot
To ſee hym make myrth withoute harme [ſtande
They ſaide he was the merryeſt in all that lande
With that a meſſenger the Emperoure dydwarne
That aboute rome was many a Sarazyne
And ſaide the Seneſchall hathe gathered a great arnye
Becauſe ye wyll not let your daughter haue hym
He purpoſeth all Rome for to dyſtroye.

Thys Emperoure had a doughter that couldenot
The whiche the Seneſchall loued as hys lyfe [ſpeake
And ofte with the Emperoure he dyd treate
For to haue her vnto hys wyfe
And for that cauſe the Seneſchall made thys ſtryfe
Becauſe the Emperoure in nowiſe wouldeGeue hym hys doughter, he ſwere ofte ſythe
Maugre hys head wynne her he ſhoulde.

The

The Emperoure heard of the Sarasyns that were
For to dystroye theyr chrystyan Countrey [come
He made a crye in greate Rome
That younge and olde shoulde make readye
As manye as were betwene fystone and fyxtye
Lordes barons and knyghtes drewe out of every cost
With an houge companye and a myghtye
They thought for to Fell the Sarasyns greate hoste.

So forth withall bothe these hostes mette
Wyth weapons bright and swedes stronge
So with soore strokes together they sette
Theyr speares braste in peces longe
Many a doughtye was slayne in that thronge
Greate horses stamped in yron wedes
Oure chrysten men were put to the wronge
With woundes depen that full sore bledes.

Oure lorde on hys seruauntes had compassion
And sent an Aungell with horse and armure
Vnto Robert as he dranke in the garden
There the Aungell bade hym arme hym sure [dure
And saide bestryde thys good stede that longe will en-
And in all haste go ryde and helpe the Emperoure
Alacke thought Robert nede hath no cure
Than rode he forth the space of an houre.

He

He rode into the thyckeſt of the fyelde
And hue and ſlewe of the Saraſyns a greate numbre
No ſteele nor harburgyn that with hym helde
Hys dentes rouges as yt had ben thonder
He ſmote mennes bodyes cleane a ſonder
Hys ſworde made many a head to blede
That the Emperoure had greate wonder
What knyght yt was that he ſawe ſo doughtye in [dede.

With the helpe of god and Robert that knyght
That daye the Saraſyns loſte the fyelde
And whan that ended was that fyght
Euery man houered and beheldo
Where that whyte knyght was that wepon dyd welde
But Robert wente into the garden
And layde downe bothe harnes and ſhylde
Yt vanyſhed a waye, he wyſt not where yt became.

And all thys ſawe the Emperours doughter
That the Aungell brought Robert the whyte ſtede
And howe at the welles ſyde he dyd of all hys armure
Therof ſhe had greate maruayle in dede
At the laſt the Emperours men dyd of theyr wede
And came to dyner into theyr lordes hall
The Emperoure ſaid this daye Jeſu dyd vs ſpede
And the white knyght fayre muſt hym befall.

Than

Than Robert came in lyke a foole playinge
Into the hall, and leapte from place to place
The Emperoure was glad to se Robert daunſynge
Than he ſpyed a great race of bloude in Robertes face
But that he gate when he in the battayle was
The Emperoure wende that hys ſeruauntes had hurt
And ſaide, there ys ſome rybaude in this place [hym ſo
That hath hurte my Robert, that no harm can do.

The Emperoure aſked whether that whyte knyght
Hys lordes aunſwered, we can not ſaye [was gone
At the laſt hys doughter that was bothe deafe and
Euer ſhe poynted to Robert allwaye [dombe.
Her father wondred at her in good faye
And aſked her myſtres, what hys doughter ment
She ſaid, ſhe meaneth that Robert thys daye [dente.
Holpe youe to wynne the fyelde with hys doughty.

Her myſtres ſaid that Robertes greate bloudye race
Youre doughter meaneth he had it in the fyelde
At her wordes the Emperoure aſhamed was
And wixed angrye and that hys doughter behelde
He ſaide thys folyſh mayde thynketh he fought in the
He bade her meſtres teache her more better [fielde
For yf ſhe will not wyſer be in her elde
A ſcole ſhall ſhe dye, there maye no man let her.

Than the ſeconde tyme the Sarasins came to Rome
And with the Emperoure fought afore fyelde
The Aungell agayne to Robert dyd come
And then he rode forth hys weapon to welde
He perisshed breſtplates and many aſhylde
He ſtrooke of bothe legge and arme
The Emperoure that knyght agayne behulde
To watche for hym hys men he dyd warne.

But he was gone they wyſt not whether
So on the morowe an other fyelde was pyght
The Emperoure charged euery man to do his endeuyll
For to haue knowen that whyte knyght
So on the morowe that they ſhoulde fyght
Syxe knyghtes laye in a woode preuelye and ſtyll
They ſayde we wyll of that noble man haue a ſight
And to our lorde brynge hym we wyll.

On the morowe the ſunne ſhone bright
Bothe partyes there was aſſembled
All the fyelde gaue a greate lyght
Of the gleyues that glyſtred, the ſteedes trembled
A wonder to heare the brydles that gyngled
With arbelaters they ſhot many a quarell
All the grounde of the noyſe rombled
Throughe the helpe of Robert the Chriſtian men ſpell

That

That daye Robert proued hym doughtye of hande
Manye fro theyr horſes downe he dyd ſhlynge
None was able hys dente for to with ſtande
There men myght heare greate rappes rynge
The noyſe of gunnes made ſuch a bellowynge
All the fyelde ſowned as yt had ben thonder
Of bloude greate gutters they myght ſe runnynge
And many a knyghtes head clefte a ſonder.

All Saraſyns fled, the chryſten won the fyelde
Robert rode awaye than full pryuelye
The knyghtes in the wodde hym behelde
And lowde vnto hym beganne to crye
Syr knyght ſpeake with vs for thy courteſye
Robert thought not agayne to turne
The other knyghtes rode after haſtelye [runne
And ſmote theyr horſes with ſpores and after dyd

Roberte ranne ouer dale and hyll
Hys ſtede was good that he had there
A bolde knyght folowed after hym ſtyll
And into the reſte he threwe hys ſpeare
So ſtrongelye to Robert he hyt beare
To haue ſlayne hys horſe, and ſmote hym in the thyꝺ
The ſpeare head braſt, and in hys legge bode there
Than was thys gentle knyght full ſoorye.

Backe agayne rode than thys knyght ſo bolde
And ſhewed the Emperoure that he was gone agayne
There of hys ſpeare heade he hym tolde
To ſee hym quod the Emperoure I woulde full fayne
Than throughe all hys lande he dyd proclayme
That he that woulde ſhewe the greate wounde with
the ſpeare head
Shoulde haue hys doughter, and not her layne
Vnto hys wyfe her for to wedde.

When the Seneſchall hearde the proclamacion
He made hymſelf a greate wounde throughe the thye
So gate a ſpeare and whyte armoure ſoone
And ſo rode to the Emperoure with all hys meynye
And ſaid Syr Emperoure that valyaunt knyght am I
That ſaued youe thre tymes fro grame
The Emperoure ſaid to hym, thou art not lykelye
And bade hym holde hys peace for ſhame

At laſt the Seneſchall ſhewed hym hys wounde
And ſaid, beholde thys and the head of the ſpeare
The Emperoure was abaſhed in that ſtounde
So there he gaue the Seneſchall hys doughter
And on the morowe he ſhoulde be maryed vnto her
So was the Emperoure by hym beguyled
He wende verelye that he had ben there.
And fought in the fielde as a knyght doughted.

On the morowe thys greate weddynge ſhoulde be
That the Seneſchall ſhoulde haue hys doughter
And ſo brought her to churche, the ſeruyce began
There by myrakle thys lady ſpake to her father [ready
And ſaide thys traytoure he hath beguyled youe here
For Robert was he that helpe you in the fyelde
I ſawe an Aungell brynge hym bothe ſhylde and ſpeare
With theſe two wordes downe on her knees ſhe kneled.

And the Emperoure whan he ſawe hys daughter
For ioye he was nere oute of hys mynde [ſpeake
And thanked god for that myracle greate
Than the Seneſchall with ſhame ſhranke behynde
So to the Pope the Emperoure dyd wynde
The mayde tolde the Pope what Robert had done
And brought them to the welle the ſpeare head to fynde
And betwene two ſtones ſhe eſpyed yt ſone.

[greate
Than went to ſeke Robert bothe lordes and ladyes
At the laſte they founde hym lye vnder the ſtayre
Amonge the dogges and with them dydde eate
They deſyred hym to ſpeake with wordes fayre
But he made ſignes as he coulde not heare
With that came an hermyte & toke hym by the ſleue
Sent thether by god he was hys goodlye father
And bade hym ſpeake, ſayinge hys ſynnes were forgaue.

Yet

Yet was he afearde to ſpeake, and durſt not
The Emperoure prayed hym to ſe hys thyc
Robert woulde not heare, but whan he ſawe the Pope
He ranne and played hys tauntes about lyghtlye
The pope bade hym ſpeake for the loue of Marye
Robert hym ſcorned and gaue hym hys bleſſynge
He woulde not breake hys pennaunce, he had leuer dye
Then the hermyte bade hym ſpeake, forgeuen is thy [ſynne.

With that Robert fell downe on hys knee
And thanked Jeſu that forgaue hym hys myſſyeynge
The pope and the Emperoure were glad trewlye
But moſt of all that ladye made reioyſynge
That was the Emperours doughter that yongelynge
Deſyrynge her father that ſhe myght Robert wedde
For thy aſkynge ſaid he, I gyue the my bleſſynge
In all the haſte doughter yt ſhalbe ſpedde.

Than Robert maryed the Emperours doughter
A feaſt was holde of great ſolempnytie
Eche of them were full gladde of other
And at the laſt when ended was thys ryaltye
He toke leaue of the Emperoure and to hys owne
He yede for the imp hys father was dead [countrey
Alſo a falſe knyght put hys mother in greate ieopardye
Whych Robert at the laſte hynge by the headde.

With

With hys mother he mette in the cyttye of Rome
The Duches was then glad and blythe
That Robert her ſonne ſo vertuous was come home
Whiche in hys youthe lyued ſo myſcheuous a lyfe
Than all men loued hym, both mayde and wyfe
Tyll it befell vpon a certayne daye
A meſſenger came from the Emperoure full ſwythe
And prayed hym to come to Rome in all the haſt he maye

He tolde that the Seneſchall had greate warre
With hys lorde the Emperoure in dede
Robert ſent after men nye and farre
In all the haſte thether he gan ſpede
But ere he came was done a myſcheuous dede
The Seneſchall the Emperoure had ſlayne
For ſorowe Roberte hearte dyd blede
In fyelde he woulde haue fought full fayne.

The Seneſchall hearde that Robert was come
And purpoſed for to mete hym in the fyelde
He reared up many a black Sarazon
With wepon ſtronge bothe ſpeare and ſhyelde
So ether partyes other beheelde
And fought together a greate batteyll
There Robert with hys handes the Seneſchall kylde
So to hys countrey returned without fayle.

And

And whan he came agayne to Normandye
He dreade euer god and kepte hys lawe
So lyued he full deuoutelye
For all thynge wouldé he do vnder awe
And punyshe Rebelles both hange and drawe
Than was he called the ſeruaunte of god
No theſe wouldé he ſaue that he myght knowe
For dreade of goddes righteouſnes the ſharpe rodde.

One chylde by the Emperours doughter he had
That was a knyght with Kinge charles of Fraunce
In manfull dedes he hys lyfe ladde
Doughty he was bothe with ſpeare and launce
Lo, thy Robert ended hys lyfe in pennaunce
And whan he dyed hys ſoule went to heauen hye
Nowe all men beare theſe in remembraunce
He that lyueth well here, no euyll death ſhall dye.

Yonge and olde that delyteth to reade in ſtorye
Yt ſhall youe ſtyre to uertuous lyuynge
And cauſe ſome to haue theyr memorye
Of the paynes of hell, that ye euer durynge
By readynge bookes men knowe all thynge
That euer was done, and hereafter ſhalbe
Idlenes to myſcheif many a one doth brynge
And ſpecyally as we daylye may ſee.

Take youe enſample of thys ſtory olde
Howe that he in youth dyd greate vengeaunce
In doynge myſcheife he was euer bolde
Tyll god ſent to hym good remembraunce
And after that he toke ſuche repentaunce
That he was called the ſeruaunte of god by name
And ſo contynewed without varyaunce
God geue vs grace that we may do the ſame.

Here endeth the lyfe of
Robert the Deuyll.

Here endeth the lyfe of
Robert the Deuyll.

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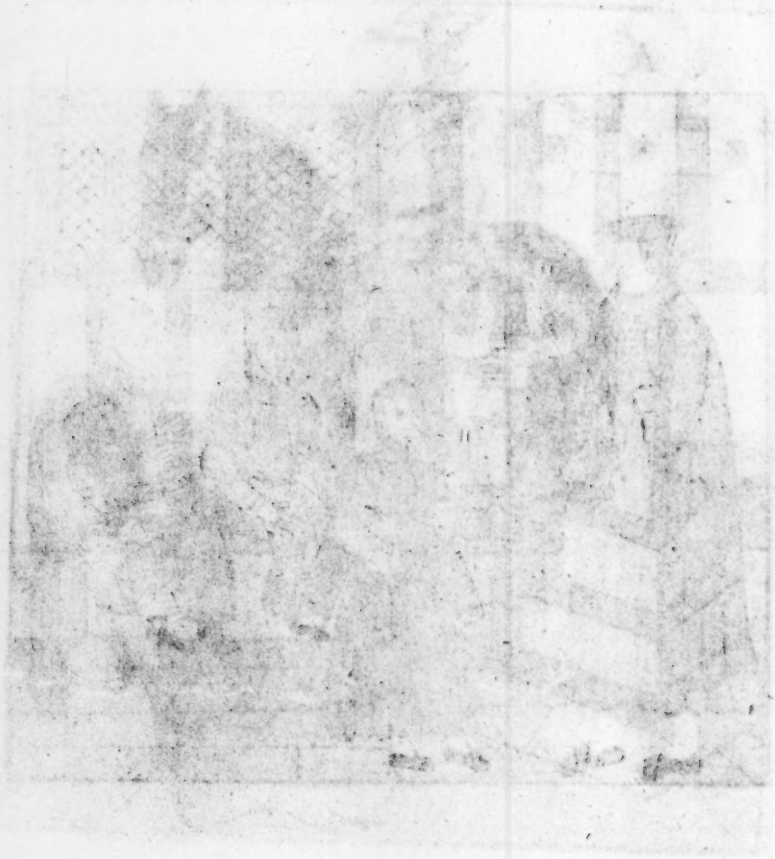

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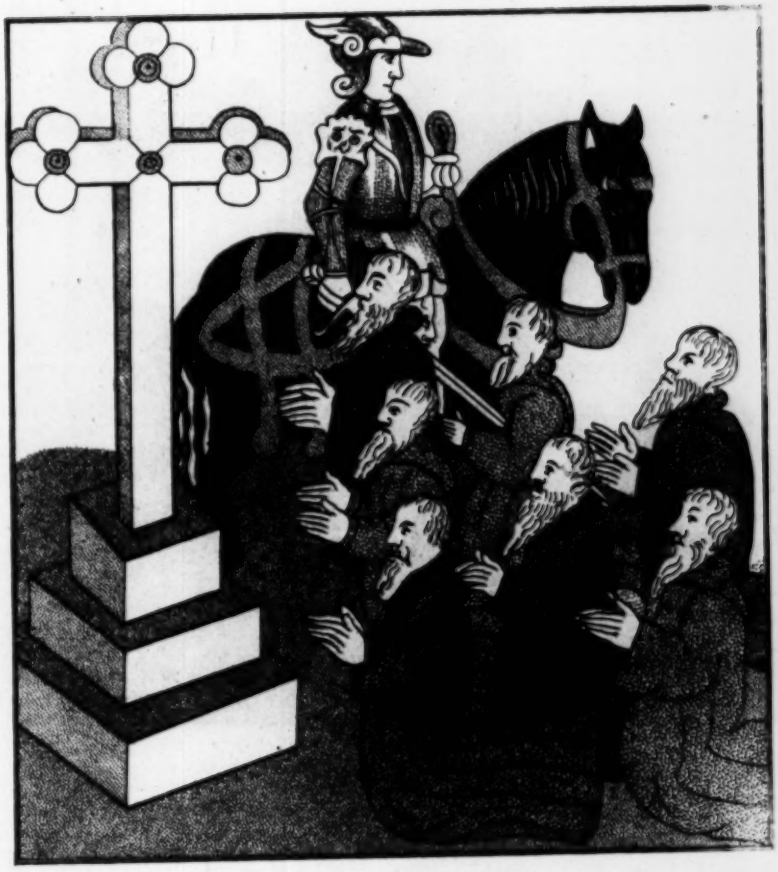

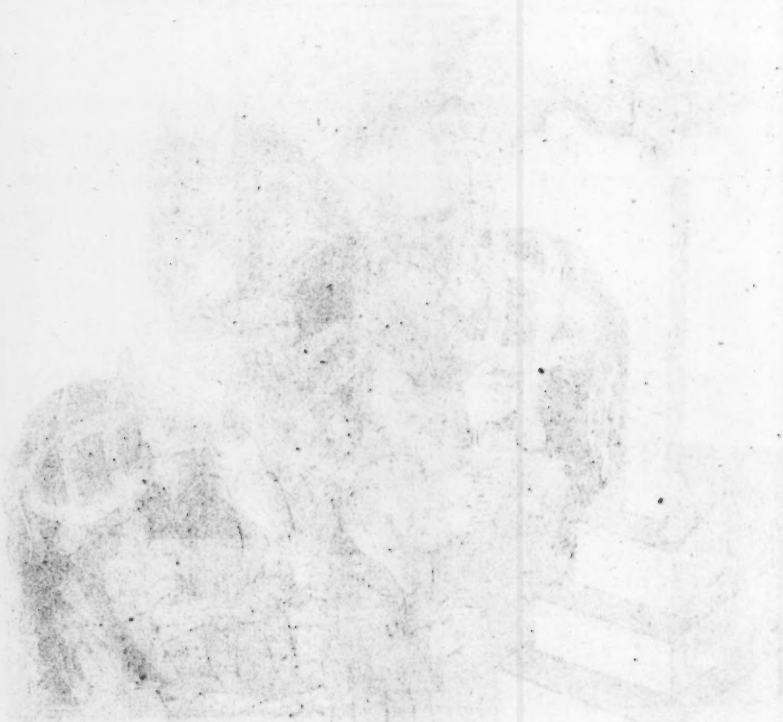

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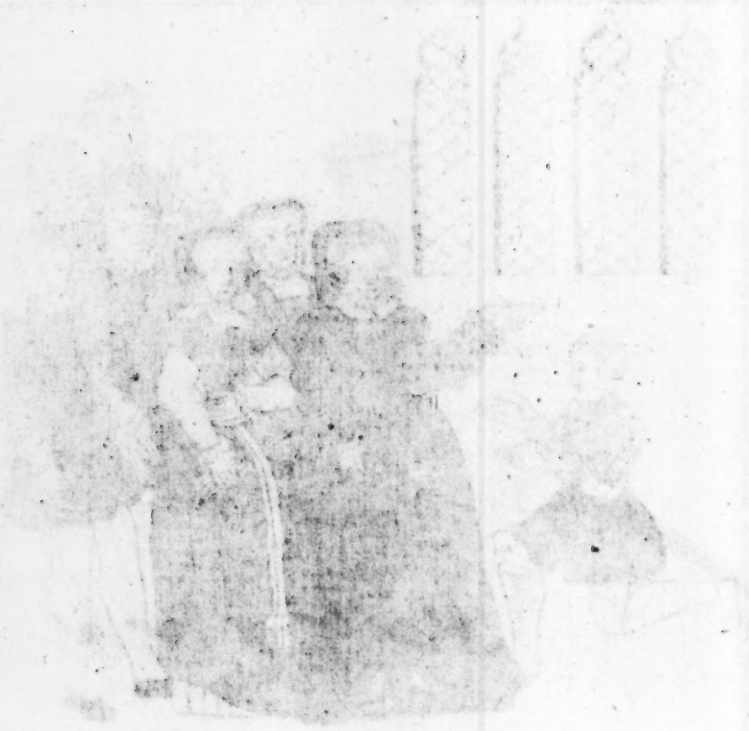

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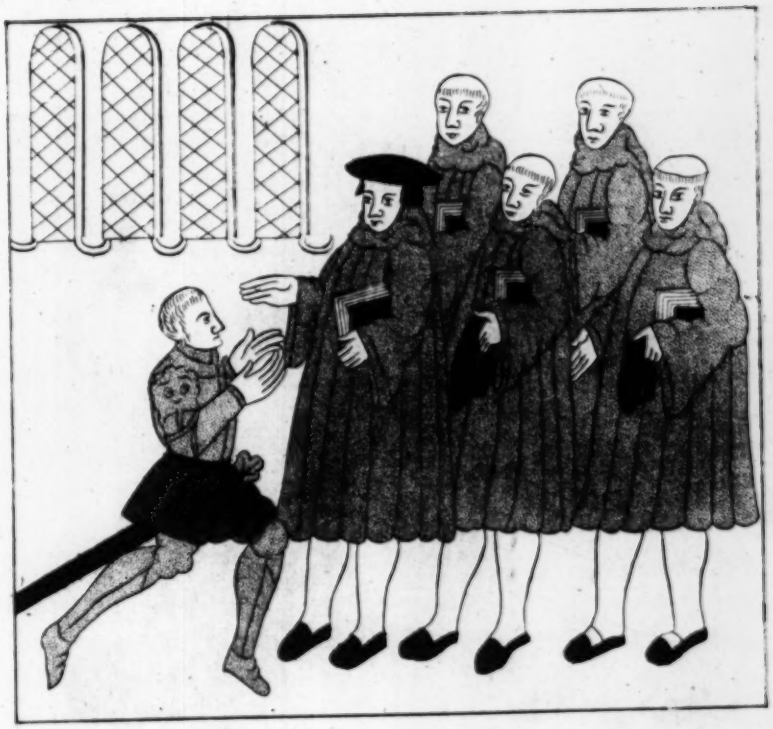

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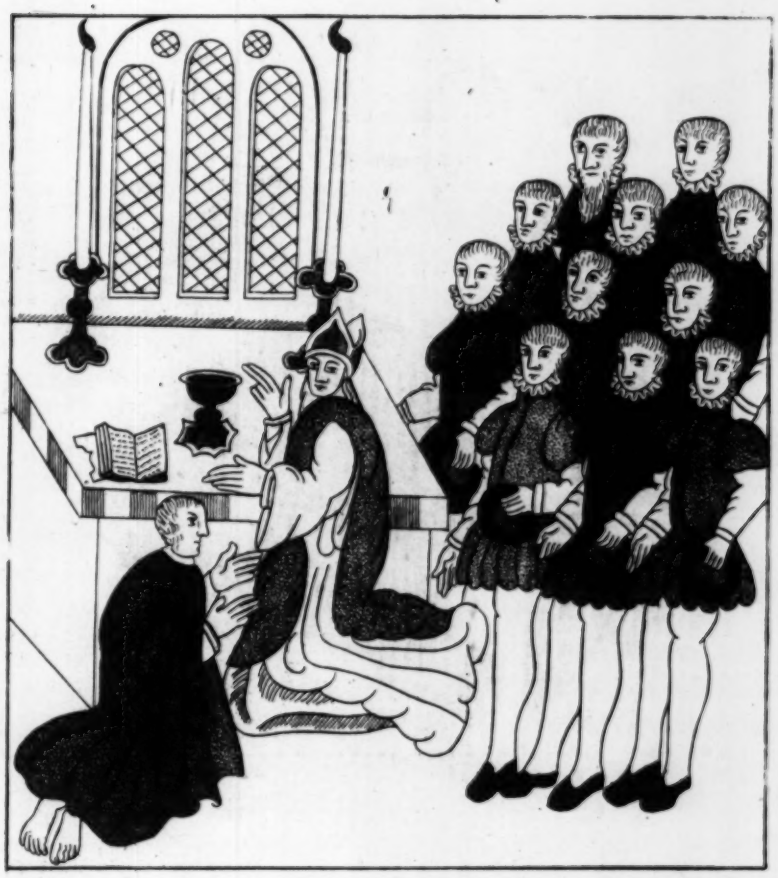

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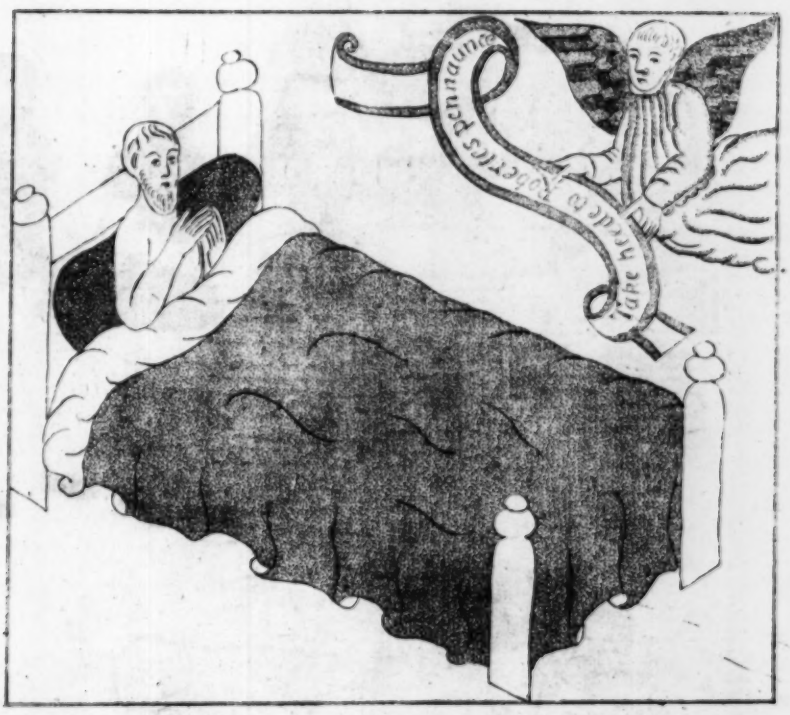
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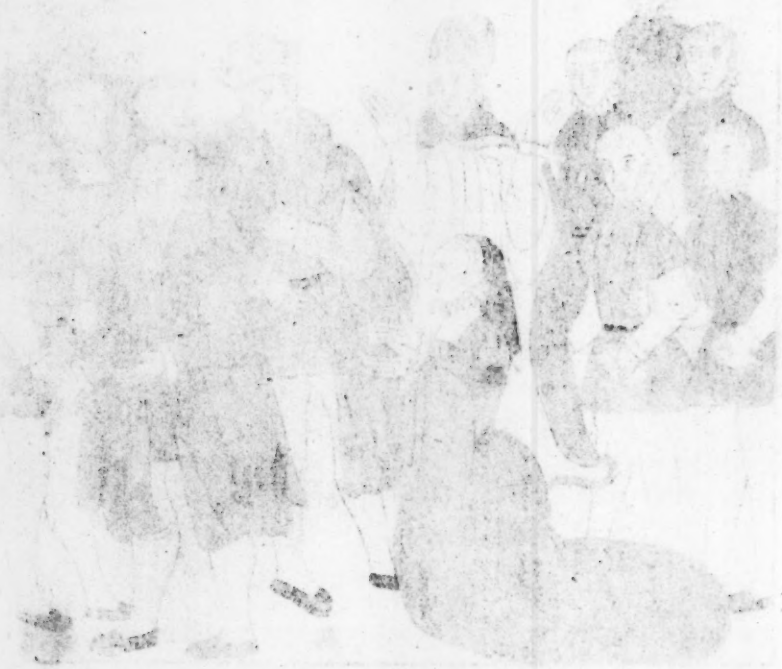

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